

Royal Holloway, University of London Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy

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Introduction and purpose

- 1 The Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy (referred to hereafter as the Policy) has been approved by the Finance Committee of the University. The contents draw on:
 - references to travel included in the University's Financial Regulations;
 - the sector best practice guidance on developing, reviewing and applying travel policies;
 - HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) guidance on providing expenses and benefits for employees
- 2 The purpose of the Policy is to:
 - define the University's policy relating to business travel and related expenditure;
 - provide guidance on the types of expenditure that can and cannot be reimbursed by the University; and
 - inform employees and those approving expenses of their responsibilities.

Scope

- 3 The Policy applies to all University employees undertaking travel and associated activities and incurring personal expenses in the course of their employment by the University. It also applies to persons who are not employees but who are travelling on the official business of the University.

The Policy does not apply to persons who are employed at another institution collaborating with the University on a research grant, unless this has been agreed at application stage. Such persons are normally expected to claim travel and other expenses related to the research grant from their own institution's research grant funds.

The Policy is not intended to cover every eventuality; therefore where there is uncertainty, or an expense is required which was not foreseen in this policy, the exception should be agreed with Finance before the expense is incurred.

- 4 The Policy applies to all University funds irrespective of their nature, including research grants and departmental funds (including 'fre spend' or 'P' accounts).

Where specific external grant funds are being utilised then the rates of reimbursement specified in the grant's terms and conditions will normally take precedence provided that these are within limits agreed by the University with HMRC. However they will not override the requirement for claims to be for actual expenditure and supported by receipts.

It should be noted that audit requirements for research grants can be very stringent and grant expenditure will be disallowed by the funder if the appropriate level of evidence (e.g. receipts) is not provided. The evidence will need to prove the expenditure was actually incurred (e.g. an invoice and not just a booking confirmation).

- 5 The Policy applies to all expenditure whether paid on invoice, with University purchasing cards or reimbursed by an expense claim.
- 6 This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including the Financial Regulations, Health and Safety policies, Counter- Fraud Policy and Anti-Bribery Policy.

Policy statement

7 Expense claims will only be allowed if:

- The expenditure is incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily¹ in the performance of the University's business.
- There is no personal use or benefit.
- The claim includes actual costs incurred only, which can be evidenced with documentation.
- The purchase represents value for money.

The overarching principle of this policy is that every expense or benefit provided to employees is taxable, unless a specific exemption applies.

Goods and services should not normally be purchased and then claimed back on expenses, as central purchasing channels should be used.

Wherever possible, expenditure should be approved in advance.

A breach of this policy by a member of staff could lead to disciplinary action, under the University's Disciplinary Policy.

Reimbursement of expenses incurred through Agresso Expense claims

HMRC has updated its guidance relating to the reimbursement of employment-related expenses (where the employee has incurred an expense and then reclaimed it from the employer rather than the item being directly purchased by the employer).

As a result, there are items which could previously be reimbursed by expense claim which can no longer be reimbursed without incurring a tax charge on the employee and a National Insurance charge for the employer.

Items which **cannot** be claimed through expenses include:

- Eye tests and provision of VDU glasses (see section 46)
- Personal gifts to staff (see section 67)
- Personal computing equipment including wearable technology (see section 42)
- Mobile phones, SIM cards and mobile top up cards (see section 41)
- Office-related furniture or equipment (see section 42)
- Purchases made through a personal Amazon account (see section 45)

Use of Ebay, Etsy or other similar 'marketplace' websites is not recommended. The University can gain no assurance that the large number of sellers on these platforms have the expected policies with regard to tax/VAT, sustainability, modern slavery, quality assurance, etc. If Ebay or similar is required please contact the Procurement team prior to purchase.

¹ See Appendix C for a fuller definition of wholly, exclusively and necessarily.

Queries, Forms and Further Information

- 8 Queries about the Policy should be addressed to the following:
- Deputy Director of Finance - Operations : principles, interpretation and HMRC requirements;
 - Head of Operational Procurement procurement;
 - Payments Team: payment of expense claims and reimbursements;
 - Insurance Manager: insurance.
- 9 The forms identified in the Policy, e.g. the Business Travel Request Form, together with guidance on completion, are available from the [Finance intranet pages](#) Further information is also available from these Web pages and the [Procurement web pages](#).

Authority and Need to Travel or Incur Personal Expenses

- 10 Travel must be for purposes that are clearly of a necessary business nature and for all travel arrangements there must be adequate budgetary provision.
- 11 The approval of the budget holder is required prior to entering into any travel arrangements or incurring personal expenses. A budget holder may give this approval through the allocation of a budget for a particular purpose or the agreement of standing arrangements for certain categories of activity or type of expense. Where appropriate, the approval of the grant sponsor or an appropriate committee must be obtained.
- 12 For travel abroad, staff are required to submit an [online travel request form](#) for the trip to be covered by the University personal accident and business travel insurance policy. The trip must be approved prior to making committed arrangements to travel. All fieldwork trips must be risk assessed before authorisation in line with the Fieldwork and Travel Policy. Where staff require insurance cover for a UK trip of substantial cost (>£250) including pre-booked overnight accommodation and/or travel tickets an online travel request form should be completed.
- 13 It is not generally the practice for members of the University Council who are not staff to travel on University business, but should such travel be envisaged, the prior approval of the Vice-Chancellor & Principal in consultation with the Chair of Council is required. Should the Chair of Council envisage the undertaking of international travel, the prior approval of the Council's Remuneration Committee should be obtained.

Completion of Claims

- 14 Claims for reimbursement of expenses should be made on the [finance system](#) in accordance with the [guidance](#) provided. Individuals who are employed in any capacity should claim via [Agresso](#) only those individuals who do not have a Resource Number, e.g. interviewees before they take up a post at the University, Council members, or students who have no employment at the University should submit expenses using a [non-staff expenses form](#) In all cases there should be a clear description of the expense and, if relating to travel, the origin and destination should be stated.

Visiting speakers

- 15 Where a visiting speaker is paid a fee, this is normally treated as employment. In these circumstances where there is a contract of employment (for example, for teaching which

is part of the core syllabus) any travel or subsistence expenses can be submitted via Agresso. NB. As Royal Holloway is their normal place of work no expenses may be claimed for home to work travel.

In circumstances where the speaker is invited outside of the core syllabus, for example for a one-off lecture or seminar, they should be paid via the University's third party payroll. Where paid via third party payroll, any expenses should be claimed via the non-staff expenses process.

Where an external speaker is paid by invoice, any travel expenses should be included on the invoice and not claimed via expenses.

As a guideline, fees for visiting speakers would not normally be expected to exceed £250 per lecture.

Where a visiting speaker is not paid a fee, reasonable travel and subsistence expenses may be claimed as long as the reimbursement is for no more than the actual costs incurred. These claims must be made through a non-staff expenses form.

It is not expected that gifts are provided to visiting speakers, other than incidental and centrally procured tokens of gratitude such as a branded keychain or similar.

- 16 Information on the claim should make clear the reason for the travel or other expenditure including, where appropriate, the organisation involved. Where appropriate a risk assessment should be completed and attached to the claim.

Appropriate narrative should be provided with the claim whether via expenses or purchasing card. For example, rather than "tickets to a show" an appropriate narrative would be "tickets for 30 x students to La Bohème as part of the Year II Romantic Opera module". This information is often required for tax purposes, so it is important to include an appropriate description of the expenditure.

Employees will only be reimbursed the **actual** travel and associated expenses incurred necessarily in the performance of their duties or for necessary attendance. Expenditure should be kept to the minimum consistent with the effective performance of work on behalf of the University.

Where the claim is in a currency other than pound sterling the system-generated foreign exchange rate should normally be used. If the system-generated exchange rate is overridden, supporting documentation must be provided to clearly evidence the rate used. This documentation must also be checked by the authorisers of such claims.

- 17 In cases where a claim is being made using rates and conditions specified in an earmarked external award, this should be clearly stated on the claim form and the relevant sections of the award's terms and conditions should be attached to the claim and highlighted. Claims must only be for the actual expenditure incurred, supported by receipts: rates specified in awards cannot be paid through the expenses system unless this is the case.

- 18 Invoices and itemised receipts should be scanned and attached to the expense claim if submitting claims via Agresso. **Credit card vouchers and airline tickets are not, on their own, acceptable substitutes.** For air travel, evidence of the amount actually

paid and of the journey and names of the travellers is required. For accommodation, invoices are required, not just booking confirmations.

Invoices and receipts **should always be legible** and where appropriate contain the logo or other identification of the supplier.

Original receipts must be kept until the claim is paid to ensure the scanned documentation is satisfactory. If receipts are not kept until this point, then the expenditure may not be reimbursed.

Where expenses are grant funded, different levels of evidence and retention requirements may be required by the funder in order for costs to be accepted as eligible. Non-compliance can result in the clawback of funding. Staff should check with the Research Finance team for the current position for the relevant funder before any expenditure takes place.

Where original invoices are not available, a written explanation must be given. Redacted credit card or bank statements would be an acceptable alternative in these cases. When visiting destinations where receipts are not normally provided it is best practice to keep a log of costs incurred each day with details of journeys made and other expenses incurred. This does not replace the requirement to retain receipts where they are available.

- 19 Claims for reimbursement should be made on a timely basis and not later than eight weeks after the expenditure has been incurred². When practical to do so, claims should be made within the financial year in which the expenses have been incurred. Staff are not expected to submit excessively large claims that cover a long time period. Exceptions to this must be approved by the Deputy Director of Finance – Operations.

Claims made against a ring-fenced award should be submitted before the end date of the award (or immediately thereafter). If an employee incurs expenses frequently then it is more cost-effective to claim these at regular intervals (e.g. monthly) rather than on each occurrence.

Expenses claims are expected to be submitted after the expense has actually been incurred. Where advance booking is required a purchasing card or the central purchasing system can be used.

- 20 Reimbursement will normally be made in £ sterling by direct credit to the UK bank account in the employee's name which is currently held on the finance system. Changes to the bank account for salary payment made by an employee on [MyView](#) will result in this bank account being the account into which expense reimbursements are made.

Authorisation of Claims

- 21 Authorisation of expenses claims is carried out within the finance system workflow, in line with the University's expenditure approval register.
- 22 By authorising a claim the person doing so is certifying that the claim complies with the Policy, including that it is reasonable, accurate and adequately supported by receipts and other evidence.

² The definition of 'incurred' includes where payment is required up front, for example booking for an event that will not actually take place until later. Colleagues do not have to wait until the actual event takes place in order to claim, however in the event of cancellation of such an event, any refund must be reimbursed to the University.

23 It is the responsibility of the authoriser to check:

- The expenditure was incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the University's business
- The expenditure is considered a reasonable and appropriate use of University funds in line with this policy
- The details of the claim have been completed correctly and it has been correctly coded
- Receipts are attached that match each line of the claim
- There is evidence to back up any departure from the default foreign exchange rate

Class and Mode of Travel

24 Journeys by air should be at economy rates. Travelling First Class has a much higher carbon footprint than standard class. It should be noted that economy class travel combined with an additional night's hotel accommodation on arrival is likely to be cheaper than business class travel undertaken immediately prior to the start of the business activity.

25 Journeys made by rail should be at the standard class. Wherever possible tickets should be booked in advance to take advantage of cheaper advanced prices.

26 Where travel is necessary, the mode of travel (e.g. air, rail, private car) and route used should be selected to achieve a reasonable balance between the cost of the travel, the time spent travelling, and the most carbon-efficient option. Travelling makes up a substantial part of the University's scope 3 emissions and reducing the environmental impact of travel is an important part of the University's Sustainability Strategy.

Use of the University's Travel Management Company is important as it allows detailed carbon reporting and comparison of travel options. (For example, the carbon emissions generated by rail travel are far less than those generated travelling by air, or by car. See Appendix F for the University's Travel Hierarchy.)

Rail should be the default option for travel within mainland United Kingdom. Use of the University's Travel Management Company to book rail travel enables detailed carbon reporting however it is not mandated for UK rail travel.

Domestic air travel within mainland United Kingdom must only be used in exceptional circumstances. When possible, travel to mainland Europe, where within reach of high-speed rail network, must be made by rail. Exceptions must be approved by the relevant Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service.

If the employee decides to use their private vehicle even though the budget holder would have expected a cheaper alternative mode of transport to be used (e.g. train or other public transport), then the amount claimed will be limited to the standard fare or cost of the journey by the alternative mode.

27 When developing contracts and other arrangements involving externally-funded travel, staff should consider the impact on their time of the travel and the possibility of securing funding for travel arrangements that facilitate a speedier turnaround.

28 Exceptions to the policy on class of travel may only be authorised by the Vice-Chancellor & Principal in conjunction with the relevant Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service, on exceptional grounds, such as a medical condition or a very strong business case. A copy of this approval must be attached to the expenses claim.

Guidance on Expenses Eligible for Reimbursement

- 29 Travel between home and an employee's normal, permanent place of work, by any means of travel, on any day, whether a normal working day or not, is not classed as business travel and is not reimbursable, although an exception may be made for disabled employees, see 30 below. Where occasional visits are made to another Royal Holloway site, this may be treated as a temporary workplace and travel costs will be reimbursable.
- 30 For disabled employees, practical and financial support may be available through the [Access to Work Scheme](#), a publicly-funded scheme which can provide support, for example relating to travel to work or equipment in the workplace.

Where government funding cannot be secured, if a reasonable adjustment has been agreed with the University to provide disabled employees with the means of travelling between home and work, or have the cost of their home to work travel paid for or reimbursed, no benefit in kind will arise for home to work travel. To comply with HMRC rules, the employee must have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the employee's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

An employee will not be able to utilise this HMRC exemption where:

- they have a potentially recurring disability that is currently in remission such that the impairment ceases to have a substantial adverse effect; or
- previously had a disability but has since recovered
- has an impairment and may be receiving medical or other treatment which alleviates or removes the effects

Where this exemption is used the circumstances must be stated on the expenses form or Agresso transaction, recording at that point in time why the exemption applies and providing evidence of the agreement of the reasonable adjustment.

- 31 Employees who work wholly from home or are engaged in a hybrid working arrangement are not eligible to have the costs of home to work travel, accommodation or other subsistence reimbursed on the occasions where they attend their primary Royal Holloway site (e.g. one of the University campuses). Accommodation at or near the University should *not* be booked using central channels such as purchasing card, payment by invoice or internal recharge from the Hub.

Where visits are more regular and employees spend more than 40% of their time at another site and this is expected to be for two or more years, this will be deemed to be a second permanent place of work and any travel costs to and from the workplace will not be reimbursable.

The journey travelled cannot be reimbursed if it is substantially the same as the journey between home and the normal or permanent place of work.

- 32 If the employee is at their place of work prior to travel, the cost of the journey claimed should be from their place of work to the destination.

To avoid HMRC charging tax on home to work travel, if the employee's journey begins at home, the cost reclaimed should normally be the lower of:

- The cost of travelling from home to the destination
- The cost of travelling from their place of work to the destination

Any exceptions to this must be justified and reasons given, for example another route is more cost-effective.

Campus-based working and travel

The University currently operates from two campuses, one in Egham and one in London. Where a colleague's primary place of work is one campus, but they spend 40% of their time at the second campus, and this is expected to be for two or more years, the second campus will be deemed to be a second permanent place of work and travel costs to and from the workplace are not reimbursable.

Where a colleague makes less frequent trips to the alternative campus, either travelling from home or from their principal campus, they may claim the lower of:

- The cost of travelling from home to the secondary campus location
- The cost of travelling between the Egham campus and the London Campus (this is capped at the standard rail/tube fare Egham to London, or 25 miles claimed each way)

33 Staff using their private vehicles (car, van, motorcycle or bicycle) for business travel may claim reimbursement at the [mileage rates](#) laid down in Appendix A. Claims should be supported by robust mileage logs. The cost of fuel for private vehicles cannot be claimed. Prior to travel, claimants should ensure they comply with the [University's Policy](#) on using your own vehicle, including ensuring the appropriate business insurance is in place and that a driver approval form is completed.

34 Vehicle hire arrangements should be made with one of the University's recommended suppliers. The vehicle hired must be a standard, non-luxury model and specification. The cost of fuel for hired vehicles may be claimed and should be supported by receipts.

For journeys by private or hired vehicle, staff are expected to travel together if it is practical to do so. An additional private [mileage allowance](#) is payable for passengers (see Appendix A).

35 The University will reimburse expenses for car parking costs incurred whilst travelling on University business away from the employee's normal place of work. Where possible, claims should be supported by receipts. The University will not reimburse excess parking charges, fines, wheel clamp unlocking, etc.

36 The use of taxis should be limited as they rarely represent value for money and alternative, more cost-effective transport should be used where possible. Taxi fares may only be reimbursed for travel where there are safety considerations, or where taxi travel is more cost effective and this can be evidenced (for example if there is more than one traveller) or where suitable local public transport is not available. Taxi use is normally expected to be for short distances only and evidence of justification must be provided with the claim.

37 Where staff are working after 9pm at a work location and require transport home a taxi will be allowable if no other suitable forms of transport are available. The time of travel must be explicitly mentioned in the expenses claim. (NB this is not allowable if late working is a choice or part of a normal working pattern.)

Subject to the provisions of section 18 above, a receipt should always be provided with the logo or other identification of the taxi firm used.

38 Local bus, tram and underground train fares for business journeys may be claimed. Claims should be supported by receipts (e.g. used tickets) where possible. Claims for journeys paid by Oyster card (or contactless card) will only be reimbursed when supported by a journey history, which can be obtained through a contactless and Oyster account online or the TFL Oyster and contactless app, or for credit cards a transaction history should be provided. Top ups for Oyster cards cannot be claimed.

39 When employees are away from their normal place of work on University business for a period of more than 5 hours they may claim subsistence to cover the reasonable and necessary cost of one meal and/or light refreshments as set out in Appendix A clause 8. Where employees are away from their normal place of work for more than 10 hours then more than one meal may be claimed and, if away overnight, accommodation.

The cost of alcoholic drinks cannot be claimed. See Appendix A for maximum subsistence rates.

Basic standards expected of hotel and other accommodation include cleanliness, privacy, personal security and the availability of breakfast. As noted in paragraph 30, subsistence or accommodation claims by home or hybrid workers for travel to their primary Royal Holloway site (e.g. one of the University campuses) will not be reimbursable.

40 Employees making a business trip may spend money on items such as private phone calls and laundry. Laundry bills may be claimable if you are required to stay away from home for more than a week. These are not 'travel expenses' but are personal incidental expenses incurred whilst travelling. The University will only reimburse those personal incidental expenses that are necessary for the business trip and in excess of those that would have been incurred at home. Claims should be supported by receipts where possible.

The costs of personal entertaining and leisure pursuits will not be reimbursed. The limits for Personal Incidental Expenses are set out in [Appendix A](#).

41 Employees making a business trip may be required to incur minor incidental non-travel business expenditure such as telephone calls, etc. These may be claimed in the normal way.

When working overseas, if colleagues are in possession of a University-owned mobile phone they should use this for making business calls. If a colleague is using their personal mobile phone and is required to obtain a local SIM card/e-SIM to enable their phone to function in that location, the SIM card should be purchased using their purchasing card rather than the cost be incurred and claimed as a personal expense. Colleagues should be aware that the SIM card remains the property of the University.

Where colleagues are using their personal devices and they incur costs in relation to business calls which are not included in any contract/bundle, or they are required to purchase an overseas data bundle specifically for that trip, the business expense can be reclaimed as long as the claim is accompanied by an itemised breakdown identifying the costs separately.

As a precondition to claiming travel expenses, employees working abroad for anything over 10 days should ensure that the trip has been properly assessed by the [Global Mobility](#) team prior to travel to avoid any unnecessary tax or other legislative obligations.

IT and office-related equipment

- 42 Employees must not incur personal expenditure on items including (but not limited to) IT hardware and software and office-related furniture, wearable technology or equipment which can be procured through the normal University purchasing arrangements. Where such items are required for a business purpose, such as research, or if they are required for working at home as part of home working or hybrid working arrangements, they must be purchased through University purchasing arrangements and not reimbursed through expenses. The University may refuse to reimburse such items and may be required to deduct tax and national insurance if a reimbursement is made.
- 43 If computing equipment, including laptops, iPads, smartphones or other office equipment, is purchased by an individual for whatever reason, including home or hybrid working, reimbursement may be refused. If such expenditure is approved for reimbursement, then the cost will be reimbursed via the Payroll, with the deduction of tax and NI.

Other overseas travel costs

- 44 Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have valid passports for overseas business travel. The University does not reimburse the cost of passports or the cost of replacing lost or stolen passports.

Employees may use the University's appointed travel agent to seek advice on the need for visas and vaccinations for overseas business travel. The cost of visas and similar may be claimed if it is not settled by an invoice to the University.

Subscriptions and licenses

- 45 The University does not ordinarily reimburse the cost of a personal subscription to a professional body, however personal expenditure incurred for this purpose is normally deductible for tax purposes. Exceptionally, personal subscriptions may be reimbursed in the following circumstances:
- the subscription is required for a specific business purpose or activity, such as attendance at a conference or publication in a journal, or obtaining information and participating in relevant discussion boards or HE sector groups; and
 - such a subscription cannot reasonably be purchased by the University directly.
 - Any other subscriptions, such as Zoom, Audible, Amazon Prime, even if they are wholly for business use, must not be purchased by staff and claimed back on expenses. Any such subscriptions are likely to incur a tax charge. If such services are needed for wholly business purposes central Royal Holloway accounts can be used (e.g. for Amazon Prime) or they can be procured outside the expenses system.
 - University purchasing cards must not be registered to personal Amazon or other retail accounts.
 - License fees, for example for software licenses, should be purchased centrally and not purchased by an individual and claimed back on expenses. The IT department should be consulted as appropriate for any software purchased. This includes Adobe subscriptions which can be requested by contacting the IT department and should not be purchased by an individual and claimed back on expenses.

Eyecare

- 46 The cost of eye and eyesight tests may be purchased directly by the University to the limit specified by the University [Health and Safety Team](#) if the employee is required to

use Display Screen Equipment (DSE) such as computers or other audio-visual equipment in the course of employment at the University. If an optician certifies that a new or altered prescription for glasses is required solely for DSE usage, the University will pay up an amount specified by the Health and Safety team towards the costs of frames, lenses and any special prisms insofar as the cost relates only to the requirements for DSE usage.

The costs of eyesight tests and glasses/contact lenses noted above must not be purchased by the individual staff member and reimbursed through expenses; they must be ordered using the University's eyecare voucher scheme that can be accessed by completing a form on MyView.

Where the cost of an eyesight test, glasses/contact lenses is reimbursed to an employee via the expenses system, a taxable benefit arises.³

Telephone Charges and home-related expenses

47 Please also refer to the previous section for [telephone expenses](#) incurred during business travel.

48 No portion of the rental of an employee's own landline, mobile telephone or smartphone or the telephone itself will be reimbursed including where home or hybrid working arrangements are in place.

Business calls will only be reimbursed if supported by an itemised list of calls showing the business calls claimed and their cost, and if these can be separately identifiable from the monthly line rental.

No arrangement may be entered into that results in the University being the subscriber for a telephone at the home of an employee, unless the prior written approval of the Director of Human Resources has been given

Similarly no expenditure on home energy usage, such as heating or lighting costs, will be reimbursable by the University for any employee.

Mobile phones cannot be claimed through Agresso expenses and, if required for business purposes, they must be paid for directly by the University, either by invoice or purchasing card.

49 Any incidental personal use of a telephone or smartphone provided by the University should be kept to a minimum. The University reserves the right to recover the cost of excessive personal use from the employee.

50 If the tariff provides for free time this should be allocated to business use on a *pro rata* basis.

51 If Pay As You Go charges that are incurred for business purposes should normally be purchased by the University and not be reimbursed through expenses. Such costs will not be reimbursed unless the prior written agreement of the Deputy Director of Finance - Operations has been obtained and there is no personal usage. As with reimbursed business calls, these will be reported via P11D (although there is no tax/NI charge).

³ Update to HMRC [Employment Manual](#) - December 2022

Internet Connection from Home

- 52 The cost of a private Internet connection and its ongoing fees are not reimbursable.
- 53 No arrangement may be entered into resulting in the University being the subscriber of an Internet connection at the home of an employee, unless the prior written approval of the Director of Human Resources has been given. The associated tax and national insurance cost will be recharged to the relevant School.

Business Entertainment

- 54 Appropriate entertainment by a member of University staff of people from an external organisation for a clear and necessary business purpose may be claimed. The expenditure incurred should be reasonable and not excessive, ie it should represent value for money and if considered from an external reputational point of view it would be regarded as a reasonable use of public funds. If the entertainment is on one of the University campuses, Internal University Catering should be used.

There should be a clearly justifiable purpose for each employee's attendance and there should not be more employees than external representatives (visitors and students) at any single event. Should the number of staff attendees exceed the number of external attendees, the entertainment costs of any employees outside this 1:1 ratio will be taxable.

The maximum limit available per head is £30 including a meal and drinks (exclusive of tips, see below). If there is a requirement or special circumstances to exceed this value, approval must be gained from the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service before the entertainment is arranged. Evidence of this approval must be provided when making a claim.

Tips added to the cost of the meal must be reasonable, up to a maximum of 15% of the cost. If the restaurant has already levied a service charge, then no tip should be given.

An itemised receipt and the [appropriate form](#) for business entertainment must accompany the claim, and should state the purpose of the entertainment, the number of people attending from each organisation and the organisation's name, and the name and role of each member of University staff in the context of the business relationship with the external organisation(s). If the number of external guests is significantly in excess of staff attending, only brief outline details of the event are required and staff need not be individually listed.

If staff are in any doubt please contact the finance team for advice prior to the event – taxqueries@rhul.ac.uk.

If classed as staff entertainment this will considerably increase the cost to the department/School – see section 63 for an illustrative example.

See Appendix E for examples of business entertaining.

Student Entertaining

- 55 According to HMRC, university students (and potential applicant students) are considered to be customers of the University. Therefore, where expenses are incurred or ordered by staff in the provision of food and drink for formal events for students or other similar entertainment, and the costs are incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in the performance of the staff member's duties, then this is allowable with no additional tax implications.

The word "Student" must be included in the narrative of the transaction followed by the description of the event (e.g. workshop), a receipt or an invoice should be provided, and the following information **must** also be included on the expense claim or purchasing card transaction to avoid unnecessary investigation by finance:

- Number of staff attending
- Number of students attending

For internal catering, the above information must be recorded in the Kinetics system or held in Departmental/School records, and a copy forwarded to TaxQueries@rhul.ac.uk in case of audit.

If the above records are not in place such entertaining may be deemed by HMRC to be a taxable benefit (staff entertainment) and will incur a tax charge on each staff member present, paid for by the department – see section 64 for examples of the potential additional tax cost.

Expenditure must relate to a genuine working occasion for the staff in attendance. It cannot simply cover entertainment of colleagues and students where there was no business reason to do so.

Typically student entertainment will involve the provision of refreshments at:

- Talks, seminars or workshops
- Focus groups
- Conferences
- Networking events
- Careers fairs
- Open days, taster days and other recruitment activities for applicants

The University expects the expenditure to be reasonable and not excessive. If the event is on one of the University campuses, Internal University Catering should be used.

Where expenditure is incurred or ordered by staff in the provision of food and drink for formal events for students, and the costs are incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in the performance of the staff member's duties, then this is allowable with no additional tax implications. Purely student-attended events, or those that are clearly for the benefit of students and not staff, do not attract a tax charge – it should be made clear on any expenses claims or purchasing card documentation that it is a student only event.

Gifts and hospitality

- 56 Excessive hospitality or other entertainment offered by an external organisation should be refused. As a guide one might only accept hospitality that one could reciprocate in a similar fashion. The acceptance of corporate hospitality where one is part of a group being entertained would normally be reasonable.

Gifts that appear to have a value of greater than £50 should be refused or returned.

- 57 If it is judged that following these guidelines might cause offence to the donor, then the Vice-Chancellor & Principal should be notified and a judgement will be made, and a record kept of this.

- 58 Personal gifts arising from the staff/student relationship should be refused if their timing could in any way be construed as influencing academic judgement or be construed as a form of bribery.

- 59 Every School should keep a Hospitality/Gift book in which all members of staff should enter any hospitality or gifts received, except for items such as diaries and calendars.

- 60 In some cases it may be appropriate to exchange business gifts. The cost of providing such gifts to external parties will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and up to a maximum value of £50 including VAT.

Any gifts provided by the University to external individuals or organisations (for example, visiting speakers) must not exceed £50. All such gifts must be coded in the finance system as Business Hospitality.

- 61 In all cases common sense should prevail and the risk of reputational damage, should acceptance (or provision) of the gift become public, must be taken into account.

- 62 Reference should be made to the University's Anti-Bribery Policy which takes precedence over the Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy.

Staff Entertaining and Gifts

- 63 The University may decide to hold central all staff annual events such as a summer barbecue or a winter festive event without incurring a tax charge. The events must be open to, and appropriate for, all colleagues in the University in order to avoid a tax liability.

Under this provision, the transaction must be for the University as a whole, stating it is claimed under the 'annual staff events' provision, and it should be coded to staff entertaining. Internal University catering should be used.

The University is unable to fund separate department or team social events (see section 64).

- 64 Staff entertainment not open to all may be permitted on an exceptions basis only with the prior agreement of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service, for example a buffet or similar to mark the end of a demanding project or a retirement. In these instances, costs for alcohol cannot be claimed and costs incurred should be reasonable, for example an event on campus using internal University catering.

Where a member of staff is retiring after a long period of service, a retirement lecture may be considered appropriate, at which students and/or the public are invited. In such cases,

any refreshments provided would be considered business entertaining and fall under the provisions of section 54.

Staff entertaining costs will attract a tax and national insurance charge which will be payable by the relevant department. The names of all members of staff attending such events must be submitted with the claim on the [appropriate form](#).

When Royal Holloway settles a tax and/or national insurance (NI) liability such as this on behalf of an employee, the payment of the tax and/or NI is in itself an additional benefit on which tax and NI is charged. Therefore, when reporting to HMRC, Royal Holloway includes a “gross up” to account for this additional benefit and the associated tax and NI liability.

Due to the gross up calculation, the cost to the department/School is significant and varies depending on the individual’s income tax rate. It is therefore important to take this into consideration when making decisions about expenditure which does not attract tax relief;

- For a basic rate taxpayer, the department’s cost will increase by 42% of the expense incurred
- For a higher rate taxpayer, the department’s cost will increase by 89% of the expense incurred
- For an additional rate taxpayer, the department’s cost will increase by 107% of the expense incurred

EXAMPLE

Here is an illustrative example where the benefit value is £100;

| | Basic rate tax payer (20%) | Higher rate taxpayer (40%) | Additional rate taxpayer (45%) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Benefit | £100 | £100 | £100 |
| Tax gross up | £25 | £66 | £82 |
| | | | |
| Benefit value (including gross up) | £125 | £166 | £182 |
| Tax at marginal rate | £25 | £66 | £82 |
| | | | |
| National insurance (Class 1B @ 13.8%) | | | |
| on benefit | £13.80 | £13.80 | £13.80 |
| on tax | £3.45 | £9.11 | £11.29 |
| | | | |
| Total cost of providing the benefit | £142.25 | £188.91 | £206.91 |

“Away days”, business breakfasts/lunches/dinners, team meetings and working lunches

- 65 Whether they are paid via the expenses system or procured centrally, particular care must be taken with regard to staff entertaining provided as part of a team event or similar meeting. Even if the primary purpose of an event is business related, events can still attract tax and national insurance charges as they can be deemed by HMRC as staff entertainment, particularly if there is a significant ‘social’ or ‘fun’ element – and this will considerably increase the cost of any such event.

Care should be taken that the agenda for such meetings is clearly business related with the 'social' element kept to a minimum. The University will not pay for or reimburse alcoholic drinks at such staff events.

Team or department events including all-day/half day meetings must be held on one of the University campuses and not offsite. Internal University Catering should be used for any refreshments.

As a guide, examples of activities that may be considered taxable by HMRC are as follows:

- Team or department events with a significant social or fun element
- social 'team building' events e.g. bowling, go karting etc
- any significant provision of refreshments
- business or team breakfasts
- team lunches, or a team "well done" meal
- meetings held at any 'social' location (e.g. local pub or restaurant)
- any event intended to reward employees for their work

Colleague refreshments

Access to tea, coffee and milk can be provided within departments, and as long as this is generally available to all staff no taxable benefit will apply. This provision relates to, for example, shop-bought teabags, coffee granules or milk – and not the purchase of hot drinks from University outlets or similar.

66 Working lunches

Light refreshments such as tea/coffee and biscuits may be provided before, during and after a meeting and will be treated as a business expense. If the meeting is on campus, Internal University Catering should be used.

If additional provision is made such as sandwiches, lunch or any other type of working meal (not including alcohol), this may be considered taxable unless it can be established that the refreshments are an integral part of the business meeting, and the meeting is taking place in an appropriate location. The lunch should typically be a light lunch taken in the place where the meeting is held – the lunch should only be a break in the meeting. It is important to keep a copy of the meeting agenda and notes in case of queries from HMRC. This should be uploaded with the expenses claim or as back up for purchasing card expenditure.

Where a meal is taken after a meeting has concluded, HMRC deems this to be entertainment rather than a working meal and so reimbursement of this expense will be taxed as such.

HMRC has strict guidelines regarding expenses in relation to the entertainment of colleagues who work within the same organisation and it is not normally accepted that a lunch expense in respect of a group of colleagues taking a meal together can be regarded as being incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of an employee's duties. Hence this cost would, in most circumstances, be taxable.

EXAMPLES

Some examples of what is **allowable** and what is **taxable** include the following;

- Sandwiches and soft drinks for a working lunch with visiting academics on campus. This cost is **allowable** as it is for business purposes.
- Sandwiches and soft drinks for departmental staff to get together. If there are no external visitors present nor is there an agenda, the cost will be deemed staff entertaining and **taxable** as such.
- Suitable lunch and refreshments as part of a work-related training event, the purpose of which is to promote good working relationships or enhance employee knowledge and skills to improve employee performance. This would be an **allowable** expense if there is a clear business objective behind the meeting.
- A buffet lunch provided as part of a day long industry meeting/strategy or training day, would be regarded as being incurred for business purposes and therefore would be **allowable**.
- A meal with departmental staff at a restaurant to continue a meeting discussion over lunch. This is not business entertaining because there are no external guests present and so the cost of this would be **taxable**.

Gifts to staff

- 67 Personal gifts to staff are generally taxable and are not normally a reimbursable expense. However, in certain cases it may be appropriate for the department to make a gift, such as flowers, for example in the event of serious illness, bereavement or on a retirement (but not for routine events such as birthdays or maternity/paternity leave). The gift from the department must cost no more than £50 including VAT and cannot be in the form of cash or vouchers. Gifts cannot be made as recognition of a work-related achievement (therefore gifts cannot be 'thank you' gifts). The Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service must authorise such expenditure in advance. Should such a gift be made it must be purchased directly by the University, for example through a purchasing card – such gifts cannot be made via expenses without a tax charge being payable.

NB If the amount exceeds £50 then the *whole* amount becomes taxable (not just the element that exceeds £50).

Gifts and cards for staff who are leaving are *not* normally a reimbursable expense. Where a contribution is sought to buy a leaving gift, either a physical collection can be made by staff members or this can be done online, for example if hybrid working arrangements are in place. Staff can use an online 'pool' or other online collection method for staff donations and these should not be claimed back on expenses, unless it is a non-routine event.

Specialist clothing (including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE))

- 68 Clothing is not normally an eligible expense, whether by reimbursement or purchased using University purchasing cards.

Where there is a specific requirement to have specialist clothing which the staff member could not reasonably be expected to already own e.g. for protection in extreme climate conditions, this should be recognised through a completed risk assessment and provided by the University either through direct purchase or purchasing card (not via expenses).

Clothing purchased in this way remains the property of the University and must be returned on leaving employment. Similarly, staff who require uniforms will be provided with them by the University.

It would not normally be expected to provide the same type of clothing to the same individual more frequently than every 5 years, unless evidence is provided that the clothing has been damaged beyond reasonable repair.

It is expected that such purchases will be compliant with the current [PPE policy](#). Consideration should be given to value for money when purchases are being made. Failure to follow these requirements may make the purchase taxable on the individual.

There are no tax implications for uniforms⁴.

Insurance for Staff and Students

- 69 For any overseas business travel or UK overnight travel, the Insurance Manager must be informed at least five days **prior to travel** by completing the University [travel insurance request online form](#). The Insurance Manager will email a copy of the confirmation of travel insurance produced from this form to the relevant Executive Dean or Director of Professional Services (or their designated deputy) for information.

Any period of extended travel or secondment will incur an additional premium, which will be charged to the School. Partners and children accompanying the traveller can be covered by the policy subject to the trip details, and for business trips only. No cover can be provided if the trip includes personal holiday – in such cases partners and children will need to have their own personal travel insurance put in place prior to the trip. Please refer to insurancequeries@rhul.ac.uk.

It is the responsibility of staff to ensure they have prepared the necessary risk assessments and have obtained up to date security and health information for their destination. All risk assessments and travel must be approved before requesting travel insurance. Please refer to the Fieldwork and Travel Policy which can be found on the [Health and Safety Webpages](#). Staff must not travel against medical advice or against the advice of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The University travel insurance policy will provide emergency 24/7 assistance, links to this will be sent on confirmation of travel insurance and also can be found on the travel insurance webpage. All travellers must take the emergency contact information with them.

.No reimbursement of insurance purchased personally, rather than using the University policy, will be made to a member of staff or student.

- 70 In relation to travel insurance claims, the University will not make an insurance claim for property or cancellation insurance of less than £100, but any losses under this value should be notified to the [Insurance Manager](#) and may be reimbursed to the individual. Valid medical and other claims will be met in full as will any property or cancellation claim over £100. In the event of a claim the School is responsible for the cost of any insurance excess deduction.

⁴ A uniform is defined as a set of clothing of a specialised nature that is recognisable as a uniform and is intended to identify its wearer as having a particular occupation, such as by way of permanent branding.

- 71 No claim will be considered if the trip has not been [advised to the Insurance Manager](#) before travel commences unless there are exceptional circumstances to take into consideration
- 72 The University's motor policy provides comprehensive cover for an employee with a valid UK driving licence to drive a hired or University vehicle on University business in the UK and parts of Europe, but the employee must first have provided the relevant details to the [Insurance Manager](#) and be cleared to do so.
- 73 Material changes such as health problems or driving convictions must be notified to the Insurance Manager. The policy is subject to an excess charge for each claim, which will be borne by the School. If a student is claiming mileage for education or research trips, they must complete a [declaration of insurance](#).
- 74 The University's motor vehicle policy does not provide cover for employees driving their own vehicles on University business. Where an employee uses their own vehicle they must ensure that the vehicle insurance policy includes cover for business use and complies with the [University's policy](#) on the use of own motor vehicles. Any extra cost which is incurred is not reimbursable.

Air-miles and other Promotional Incentives

- 75 The generation of air-miles or similar rewards arising from travel on University business may not be utilised for personal use.

Payment of miscellaneous expenses

- 76 Cash advance payments will not be made by the University because they are costly to administer and require considerable additional processing
- 77 Whenever possible, the University's approved travel provider should be used for the direct payment of fares, car hire, hotel expenses, etc., thus leaving the minimum amount to be met in the course of the journey. Any such expenditure can be met by using a purchasing card or a prepaid card issued to staff.

Participant payments

- 78 Payments may be required to individuals who volunteer to participate in research activity individually or as part of a panel. The payments are to compensate the participants for out of pocket expenses and reasonable costs of participation in the research, including travel and subsistence. As such, the arrangements should not create a contract of employment, although the participant may be required to report via self-assessment if applicable (also see section 80 below).
- 79 The most efficient way to make such payments is to use a prepaid card or retail vouchers (e.g. Amazon or other store vouchers) that can be purchased centrally (for example using a purchasing card) and distributed to participants. Participants can continue to be paid through recognised companies like Prolific or Amazon's Mechanical Turk with a University purchasing card. It is acceptable to provide low-value physical items instead of cash if appropriate.

On an exceptional basis payments may also be made in cash and then claimed back via expenses. If cash is used a risk assessment must be prepared that details:

- how the cash will be sourced (e.g. at a bank branch if small change is required)
- how cash will be kept secure during transit and;

- how cash will be stored securely

80 For any participant payments over £50, there is an increased risk that HMRC would consider it a reward for work. Therefore, in all cases where the participant payments are over £50:

- Finance should be contacted to discuss what the payment is for, how the payment should be made (e.g. prepaid card or BACS) and to confirm that it could not be construed as a payment for work.
- Records must be kept of the following:
 - Name of experiment/study
 - Date or period of the study
 - Name of participant
 - Amount paid to the participant

For payments to individuals that are not research participants – see section 86.

Procurement

81 Information on travel procurement is maintained on the [Procurement web pages](#). Further advice, including escalation and price queries, is available from the Procurement Team.

82 For air travel use of the University's preferred Travel Management Company (TMC) is required; if there are genuine business reasons why an alternative provider is to be used outside the preferred Travel Management Company, this will be acceptable if pre-approved as an exception, however this reason should be clearly reported as part of the expenses claim (or uploaded with purchasing card documentation) and approved by the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service. Please note minor price variations will not be considered a valid business reason.

Accommodation bookings must be made through the University's Travel Management Company – see Appendix A, section 9 for further details.

Payments to the Travel Management Company must be made by Purchase Order/Invoice route via Agresso. Payments must not be made personally by staff to the Travel Management Company and reclaimed on expenses.

Combining business and non-business travel

83 If business and non-business travel are combined in a trip, the expenses claim must show in sufficient detail the costing of the business and non-business elements to prove that there is no subsidy of the non-business costs and that the primary purpose of the trip was business.

Spouses and Partners

84 Expenses incurred by, or on behalf of, spouses, partners, carers and dependent children are not reimbursable. An exception to this can only be made when there is an essential and exceptional business case. The costs must be essential in order for the staff member to perform the duties of their employment. The business case must be authorised in advance by the Vice-Chancellor & Principal on the recommendation of the Executive Dean or, Director of Professional Service.

In the case of costs relating to dependent children, only the additional costs over and above the staff member's normal childcare arrangements may be claimed.

There is no tax relief available for travel and accommodation where an employee has childcare responsibilities and has to take their child abroad while carrying out University business. If an exception is agreed as described above, tax and National Insurance contributions will be payable on the costs incurred.

Relocation

- 85 Relocation expenses must be claimed in accordance with the University's Removal and Relocation Expenses Policy

Payments to individuals

- 86 Expenses should not normally be used for goods and services.

Payments should not be made to external individuals and then claimed back via expenses. This includes the use of interpreters, translators, ad hoc music tutors and other similar freelancers who should *not* be paid directly by staff, or students, and claimed back on expenses.

When engaging individuals it is the University's responsibility, and not the individual's, to determine their employment status and ensure the right amount of tax and national insurance is paid if it is deemed employment.

It is the responsibility of the University, and not the individual student or staff member, to pay for goods and services – this burden should not initially fall on staff or students.

Therefore all such assignments should undergo an off-payroll employment status check via the Procurement Team and not be paid via expenses.

Roles and responsibilities

- 87 All employees are responsible for adhering to this policy when undertaking travel and associated activities and incurring personal expenses in the course of their employment by the University.

The policy also applies to persons who are not employees but who are travelling on the official business of the University.

- 88 All employees are responsible for ensuring the approval of the budget holder is obtained prior to entering into any travel arrangements or incurring personal expenses. A budget holder may give this approval through the allocation of a budget for a particular purpose or the agreement of standing arrangements for certain categories of activity or type of expense.

- 89 Staff members authorising a claim are responsible for ensuring that the claim complies with the Policy, including that it is reasonable, accurate and adequately supported by receipts and other evidence. It is the responsibility of the authoriser to check the expenditure was incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the University's business and is a reasonable and appropriate use of University funds (see section 23 for further detail).

Related documents

90 The following documents are related to this policy:

Procurement policies and procedures
Purchasing Card Manual
Financial Regulations
Counter-Fraud Policy
Anti-Bribery Policy
Health and Safety Policies

Document control

| Policy Owner (usually Director-level) | | Executive Director of Finance |
|---|------------------|---|
| Operational Owner (where different to policy owner) | | Deputy Director of Finance – Operations |
| Approving Body | | Finance Committee |
| Approved on | | March 2025 |
| To be reviewed before | | March 2027 |
| Version History | | |
| Version (newest to oldest) | Date of approval | Summary of changes |
| March 2025 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of the provision of gifts for visiting speakers (section 15) Clarity on methods for booking rail travel and stipulation that domestic air travel (mainland UK) must only be used in exceptional circumstances Inclusion of clauses relating to the use of Internal Catering for campus events (various) Clearer wording on use of taxis only as an exception (section 36) Provision of central all staff festive or other annual events, as opposed to contributions to individual team or department festive events (section 63) Stipulation that team meetings or events should be held on campus (section 65) Clarity over provision of tea and coffee for staff (policy previously silent on this, section 65) Clarity over cumulative subsistence claims (Appendix A section 8) Clarity over accommodation not booked through the travel management company (Appendix A, section 9) Other minor clarifications or updates |
| August 2024 | 20 June 2024 | Updated wording regarding sustainable travel Addition of maximum subsistence rates Removal of ability to claim for alcohol as part of subsistence or at work-related staff events |

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------|--|
| | | Greater clarity on business and student entertainment and addition of 1:1 ratio for staff:external guests Appendix with specific examples of business entertaining Other minor amendments |
| September 2023 | 14 September 2023 | Clarity on what can and cannot be claimed on expenses (including changes to HMRC rules) Addition of reference to global mobility Addition of information on licenses and subscriptions Revised sections on business, student and staff entertaining Additional section on working lunches Additional section on provision of clothing Additional appendices for guidance |
| June 2023 | 27 June 2023 (CFO) | Minor alterations, e.g. college to University and minor change to travel management policy sections |
| January 2023 | 19 January 2023 | Clarity on provision of home to work travel for disabled employees. Clarity on the ability to claim for family members or dependents' costs. Changes to the provision of eye tests/glasses |
| October 2021 | 28 October 2021 | Addition of hybrid working clauses New section on payments to individuals Additional information on payments to research collaborators and visiting speakers |
| June 2021 | 10 June 2021 | Clearer requirements for authorisers of expense claims Clearer guidance on the purchase of office-related equipment A new section on staff/business entertaining Removal of cash advances Augmented section on research participant payments |
| June 2019 | 13 June 2019 | Various |
| July 2017 | July 2017 | Preclude use of AirBnB and similar sites |
| April 2017 | April 2017 | Addition of driver declaration for students claiming mileage |
| January 2016 | January 2016 | Para 38 clarification of subsistence allowance, removal of scale rates from appendix |
| January 2014 | January 2014 | Addition of link to Approved Driver Status Policy for clarification |

Appendix A: Mileage Rates, Maximum Subsistence Rates and Personal Incidental Expenses

Mileage Rates

- 1 Employees using their own vehicles on University business may claim a mileage allowance as follows:

| Private Vehicle | Cumulative Distance in Tax Year | Rate per Mile |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Car or van | Up to 10,000 business miles | 45 pence |
| Car or van | Over 10,000 business miles | 25 pence |
| Motorcycle | Any distance | 24 pence |
| Bicycle | Any distance | 20 pence |

These rates matches the HMRC approved mileage rates.

- 2 For each employee who travels on business as a passenger in a private vehicle an additional 5 pence per mile may be claimed. The name of any passenger(s) must be identified in the claim.

Maximum Subsistence Rates

- 3 When employees are away from their normal place of work for a period of more than five hours and incur expenses on food and (if away overnight) accommodation, subsistence expenses may be claimed as per clause 8 below. This does not apply for home or hybrid workers if the travel is from home to their primary Royal Holloway site (e.g. University campus).
- 4 No subsistence is payable for any periods when meals and/or accommodation are included in the fare (for example air travel or rail sleeper).
- 5 Alcoholic drinks cannot be claimed under subsistence.
- 6 All claims for subsistence must be for actual expenditure incurred and, subject to the provisions at clause 18 of the policy, must be supported with receipts. Gratuities (tips) must not be excessive: the claimant may write the amount on the receipt if it does not already appear there.
- 7 The overnight allowance for accommodation with friends/relatives has been withdrawn by HMRC.
- 8 Claims for subsistence based on actual expenditure, supported by receipts, will be reimbursed up to the maximum level of expenditure as shown below:

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Breakfast | £10.00 max | When consumed during business travel. For day travel (ie not overnight) this can only be claimed if a journey begins before 6am. | Tips: Up to 15% (included within the limits stated) |
| Lunch | £10.00 max - alcohol is not claimable | When consumed during business travel for more than 5 hours. | |
| Evening Meal | £30.00 max - alcohol is not claimable | When consumed during business travel for more than 5 hours or overnight. | |
| Snack, tea, coffee, soft drinks | £10.00 max | When consumed during business travel for more than 5 hours. | |
| Away for more than 5 hours – one meal can be claimed Away for more than 10 hours – more than one meal may be claimed | | | |
| Overseas subsistence | Actual costs claimed should be broadly in line with guideline rates http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/wwsr-bench.pdf | | |

Where business travel takes place over more than ten hours and spans more than one meal (breakfast/lunch/dinner), cumulative claims will be allowed where reasonable. For example, if business travel occurs between 10am and 8pm, a cumulative claim covering lunch and evening meal of up to £40 in total would be allowed (supported by actual receipts).

It is the expectation that accommodation will be booked through the University's Travel Management Company – see clause 9. Any claims made for hotel accommodation based on actual expenditure must not exceed the limits set out below. Exceptions to this must be approved in advance by the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service in conjunction with the Head of Department or appropriate line manager, and a copy of the approval must be attached to the expenses claim.

| Accommodation location | Maximum |
|---|----------------|
| Major cities | £200 |
| Other | £130 |
| Overseas: Actual costs claimed should be broadly in line with guideline rates http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/wwsr-bench.pdf | |

9 Accommodation bookings must be made through the University's Travel Management Company , unless:

- booking is arranged through local universities booking on an employee's behalf, or
- for conferences, a designated conference hotel is booked (for genuine business reasons and/or value for money) and/or a conference discount is provided.

If there are other genuine business reasons outside the above why an alternative provider is to be used outside the preferred Travel Management Company the reason should be clearly reported as part of the expenses claim (or uploaded with purchasing card documentation) and this must be approved by the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service. Please note minor price variations will not be considered a valid business reason. A risk assessment must be performed taking into account the information in sections 10 and 11 below.

10 Private rented accommodation such as Airbnb may only be used as an alternative to the Travel Management Company if there is a clear business reason, and only where the stipulations set out below can be met. Staff should note:

- Airbnb is not regulated and may fail to meet basic safety standards such as smoke detection, electrical testing, extinguishers and fire escape.
- Airbnb is highly unlikely to share traveller information with the University in the event of an emergency.
- Airbnb hosts sometimes cancel at the last minute for various reasons and University insurance will not cover any direct or indirect costs associated with this. Airbnb hosts may have no insurance and their normal domestic insurance may not cover them for letting rooms.
- The accommodation may be an unused back bedroom in a stranger's house – it will often be less secure than a hotel, with no CCTV, key control, robust door locks, swipe access or room safe. Travellers should wherever possible favour accommodation where it has smoke detection and good locks / security.
- Airbnb bookings may be illegal if the country / region / city / building does not permit short-term room rentals, or if the host has not complied with local regulations but nonetheless advertises the property on the platform regardless.

Therefore Airbnb or other private rental accommodation can ONLY be used where:

- The country / city / region / building permits short-term lets and the property complies with local regulations (the booking is legal).
- There is a reasonably full history of positive reviews.
- The accommodation is a self-contained apartment (e.g. not a stranger's back bedroom or similar).
- The neighbourhood can be identified as safe.
- The Airbnb bookings calendar is not relied upon, but the host is emailed directly (some hosts are not assiduous about updating calendars).
- Full contact details are left in the travel plan including location of the apartment and owner contact details.

Please refer to the [Procurement](#) Team for any queries regarding travel suppliers.

11 Hotel accommodation at or near the University is not normally eligible for reimbursement where the University is the employee's primary Royal Holloway site. In most circumstances, Englefield Green, Egham, Virginia Water and Old Windsor would be considered to be near the University. This also applies to home or hybrid workers.

Where in exceptional circumstances it is necessary for a member of staff to stay at or near the University overnight (for example, if there is a very early flight the following day) this should be authorised by the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service prior to the cost being incurred, with a record of the authorisation and the reason for the exception attached to the expenses claim form or Purchasing card statement – this is required as justification for the exceptional nature of the arrangement in the case of HMRC audit.

Such overnight stays are treated by HMRC as a taxable benefit therefore the University is obliged by HMRC to pay Tax and National Insurance in addition to the accommodation cost. This will be charged to the subproject which paid for the original accommodation cost.

Should the provision of overnight accommodation become a regular arrangement HMRC could view this as provision of accommodation which becomes a taxable benefit on the individual.

Personal Incidental Expenses Rates

- 12 Personal Incidental Expenses are described in the Policy. The following maximum rates apply only to overnight stops away from home on University business. Only actual expenditure can be claimed and should be supported by receipts where possible. If more than the limit is claimed then all of the cost becomes a taxable benefit and tax and national insurance will become payable.

Maximum Personal Incidental Expenses

| Place | Maximum Nightly Rate |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| UK | £5 |
| Overseas | £10 |

Appendix B: items that should not be claimed on expenses

The following items should NOT normally be claimed on expenses. This list is not exhaustive.

- Goods and services
- IT and personal computing equipment of any value
- IT subscriptions, e.g. software licenses, zoom subscriptions
- Office-related furniture or equipment
- Mobile phones
- SIM cards/e-SIMs and mobile top ups unless required overseas
- Equipment required for research
- Stationery unless required overseas
- Clothing
- Excess parking charges, fines or wheel clamping fees
- Top ups for oyster cards
- Personal entertaining and leisure pursuits while travelling
- Passports/replacing lost or stolen passports
- Private internet connection at a colleague's home
- Personal gifts to staff, leaving gifts or cards (unless exceptional – see section 66)
- Payments to external individuals, e.g. interpreters, translators, ad hoc tutors, and other freelancers
- Flights and accommodation (Travel Management Company should be used wherever possible, paid via PO/invoice or purchasing card)
- Eye tests and provision of glasses

Appendix C: Definitions

The expenditure claimed must be incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the University's business.

Wholly: The expense must be incurred wholly for the purpose of the employment. This means that the expense must have been incurred solely for the benefit of the University and should not have any personal element or benefit attached to it.

Exclusively: The expense must be incurred exclusively for the purpose of the employment. This means that the expense should not have any dual purpose and if it does, only the portion directly related to the business/employment can be claimed.

Necessarily: The expense must be necessarily incurred in the performance of the duties of employment. This means that the expense must be considered essential or appropriate for the nature of the employment. It should be directly linked to the activities that are required to carry out the employment effectively.

Appendix D: Account codes – Entertaining

The table below should be used to assist with the allocation of entertainment expenditure to the correct category for expense claims, purchasing card and purchase order coding.

| Item from Agresso expenses module | Agresso account code | Explanation |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Business Entertaining | 6763 – Hospitality – Business Entertainment | This should only be used when the purpose of the event is entertaining third parties who are not employed by the University. This would normally be customers which includes students, but could also be members of compliance bodies, research funders, or research collaborators. Note that undergraduate external examiners are employees of the University. |
| Meals & Refreshments | 6050 – Staff Travel and Subsistence | This is for normal meals and refreshments when travelling on business only and/or field trips. Any other event which involves entertainment of staff or third parties should be allocated to one of the Entertaining categories. |
| Staff Entertaining – Annual | 6764 – Hospitality – Annual staff events | This is for Staff entertainment under section 63 of the policy above. That is festive all staff events or other events open to all staff. |
| Staff Entertaining – Other | 6765 – Hospitality – Other staff entertaining | This is Staff entertainment under section 64 of the policy above. That is events which are not open to all staff. |
| Student - meals and refreshments | 6300- Travel - Student | This is for normal meals and refreshments when traveling on field trips |
| N/A | 6761 – University Hospitality | Hospitality from the University as a whole rather than one school or department |
| N/A | 6762 – University Hospitality drink | As above but separating alcoholic drinks |

Appendix E: Business and staff entertaining examples

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, internal University catering must be used on campus.








| Event | Allowed under policy? | Taxable? | Form required? |
|---|---|--|---|
| Reception after RHUL-organised public lecture or performance, open to the public, staff and students. | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | If the number of staff exceeds the number of students/the public the additional costs will be taxable. | Business Entertaining Form NB. If the number of external guests is significantly in excess of staff attending, only brief outline details of the event are required and individual staff do not need to be itemised. |
| Reception after Departmental meeting or other, to encourage conversation and exchange | Only as an exception – must be approved by the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service prior to the event | Yes | Staff entertaining form |
| Reception for networking accompanying meeting of partners for a training consortium | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | If the number of staff exceeds the number of students/the public the additional costs will be taxable. | Business entertaining form |
| Refreshment accompanying a meeting with external research partners. | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack ⁵ will not be taxable. For more substantial refreshments such as lunch or dinner, if the number of staff exceeds the number external attendees the additional costs will be taxable. If refreshments are provided as part of the meeting, these may not be taxable, | Light refreshments only – no form required For anything else: Business & Student Entertainment Form |

⁵ For these purposes a snack would be food that would *not* be so substantial as to constitute a meal.

| Event | Allowed under policy? | Taxable? | Form required? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | but a form is still required for evidence | |
| Reception during or after a workshop or conference, open to invited staff, students and partners, internal and external. | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | If the number of staff exceeds the number of students/partners the additional costs will be taxable. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack – no form required For anything else: Business & Student Entertainment Form |
| Reception during or after a cross-school meeting, open to members of a research centre. | Only as an exception – must be approved by the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service prior to the event | Yes | Light refreshments during the working day (e.g. tea, coffee, snack) – no form required. For anything else: Staff entertaining form |
| Reception during or after a departmental seminar, open to members of a department including staff and students. | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack will not be taxable. If the number of staff exceeds the number of students the additional costs will be taxable. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack only – no form required For anything else: Business & Student Entertainment Form |
| Reception during or after a PhD workshop, open to students and staff in a department, school or other unit in University. | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack will not be taxable. If the number of staff exceeds the number of students the additional costs will be taxable. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack only – no form required For anything else: Business & Student Entertainment Form |
| Lunch or drinks for external examiners accompanying a PhD viva. | Yes for a clear and necessary business purpose. If over £30 per head prior approval of the Executive Dean or Director of Professional Service is required. | Light refreshments, e.g. tea, coffee, snack will not be taxable. If the number of staff exceeds the number of external examiners the additional costs will be taxable. | Light refreshments only – no form required For anything else: Business & Student Entertainment Form |

Appendix F: Travel Hierarchy

TRAVEL HIERARCHY

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Digital communication |
|  | Walking and wheeling |
|  | Cycling |
|  | Public transport |
|  | EVs (incl. car sharing) |
|  | Petrol and diesel vehicles (incl. car sharing) |
|  | Fly |